Why did the ENERGY STAR energy performance score of my office building change on June 7, 2010?

On June 7, 2010 a modification was made to the methodology for computing office building ENERGY STAR energy performance scores within Portfolio Manager. This modification affected buildings whose total office gross floor area was greater than 200,000 square foot. These buildings may have experienced decreases in their ENERGY STAR scores.

These changes reflect the result of recent analysis by EPA. In response to inquiries from ENERGY STAR partners, EPA undertook an analysis of the energy requirements of larger office buildings. EPA analyzed data from thousands of buildings in both Portfolio Manager and the Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS, which serves as the basis of the ENERGY STAR energy performance scale). As a result of this analysis, EPA found that larger office buildings tend to have higher energy use intensity (EUI) values. This relationship is observed up until approximately 200,000 square foot. Over 200,000 square foot, however, EUI values do not increase with building size, according to EPA's analysis.

Based on this analysis, EPA has improved the calculations within Portfolio Manager to provide more accurate ENERGY STAR scores for larger office buildings. The new calculation bounds the energy allowance associated with square foot at 200,000 square foot, reflecting the fact that buildings of larger sizes do not have different EUI value than their 200,000 square foot counterparts, on average. EPA's technical methodology document also includes information on this calculation:
http://www.energystar.gov/ia/business/evaluate_performance/office_tech_desc.pdf

As a result of these changes, office buildings larger than 200,000 square foot were likely to experience ENERGY STAR score decreases proportional to their size on June 7, 2010. Note that other changes, such as the addition of a new Data Center energy performance scale, will also affect the ENERGY STAR score of any specific building. Thus, some office building scores were also observed to go up.

EPA always strives to provide the most accurate energy performance metrics. To maintain the integrity of the ENERGY STAR energy performance scale and the ENERGY STAR label for buildings, EPA undertakes periodic assessments of the ENERGY STAR score methodology, and analysis of new data when it is available. Based on proven analytical results, EPA will occasionally make changes to increase the accuracy of the ENERGY STAR energy performance scale so that it provides the greatest value to our partners and to the commercial building market.

Please refer any questions to buildings@energystar.gov.